

# HEALTH & THE ARTS



ARTHUR FRANK MATHEWS  
1860-1945  
PAINTER AND MURALIST





OLYMPUS, THE MUSES

## HEALTH & THE ARTS

THE MEDICINE MAN

THE EVIL EYE



When the Health Sciences Library building (originally the Lane Medical Library of Stanford University School of Medicine) was built, three murals for the reading room were commissioned from Arthur Mathews, the renowned muralist and painter.

The murals, collectively titled Health and the Arts, fill three arches on the east side of the reading room at the Health Sciences Library.

Here is a contemporary description of the murals from the report on the dedication of the Lane Medical Library Building, November 3, 1912, contributed by Professor Ray Lyman Wilbur, Execu-

tive Head of the Department of Medicine of Stanford University, in an appendix of the Trustees' Series report No. 22:

"The general reading room, with its open shelves of reference volumes, its broad reading tables and its quiet green walls, is particularly fortunate. To this room is added beauty and dignity, also, by the mural paintings from the brush of Arthur F. Mathews, of San Francisco. These pictures are the gift of Mrs. Henrietta Zeile [a prominent art patron of the period]. They occupy three large panels on the east side of the Reading Room, adding a fine touch of color to the somewhat somber green wall."

"One shows beneath a spreading oak an Indian medicine man- the primitive art of healing. Another is a mediaeval towered city with a red robed doctor reassuring a group of frightened people who cower before a woman with the "evil eye". In the central panel Urania, in starry blue kneels, with her hand upon a sphere, Terpsichore with dancing girls embroidered on her cloak, ivy-crowned Thalia, dark draped Melpomene and their sister muses surround a white clad woman, Hygeia, and a child."

"The work is in Mathews' best style, the flesh tones of the life size figures wonderful, the landscapes beautiful with purple shadows, rolling hills and sunlit clouds."



## A brief introduction

Arthur F. Mathews was born October 1, 1860 in Markesan, Wisconsin, and came to California with his family at the age of six. He started his artistic



career as an apprentice draftsman in his father's architectural firm in Oakland. San Francisco lithographers Britton & Rey gave Arthur Mathews a position as designer and lithographer.

In 1885 he began a five-year period of study in Paris at the Academie Julian, where he won the coveted Grand Gold Medal. Upon his return to San Francisco in 1889, he produced many paintings and murals, winning prizes and commissions for private residences and businesses. In 1890 he held his first gallery show at Vickery's Gallery, San Francisco.

In addition, Mathews began teaching at the California School of Design, (affiliated in 1893 with the University of California and renamed the Mark Hopkins Institute of Art). He soon became the director and remained in this position until 1906.

In 1894 he married Lucia Kleinhans, a fellow artist and partner in his projects.

The Mark Hopkins Institute and Arthur & Lucia Mathews' studios were destroyed in the 1906 earthquake & fire. Many of their works in public and private collections were lost.

After the earthquake, the Mathews rebuilt their



studio as well as a furniture shop and publishing studio at 1717 California Street to help in the rebuilding of the city. The Furniture Shop produced furniture, frames and decorative objects for homes and businesses. The Philopolis Press published books on art, poetry, California, collector's editions, stationary and the Philopolis Magazine- devoted to city planning and art. At the same time the Mathews were working on their own paintings and murals. Many of the paintings have frames specially made for them at the Furniture Shop. In fact, the frames are an integral part of the paintings.

In 1923 the American Institute of Architects awarded Arthur Mathews its Gold Medal for Distinguished Achievement in Painting in recognition of his many contributions to muralist art. Included among more than 20 major mural commissions were those for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, the Oakland Public Library, and the State Capitol Building of California in Sacramento.

For a comprehensive study of the works of Arthur Mathews, please consult the book written by Harvey L. Jones, senior curator of art at the Oakland Museum of California, as a companion book to their exhibit "California as Muse: The Art of Arthur & Lucia Mathews" taking place October 28, 2006 - March 25, 2007.

Jones, Harvey, with a foreword by Kenneth Starr and an essay by Kenneth R. Trapp. *The Art of Arthur & Lucia Mathews*. Pomegranate Communications, 2006. ISBN: 0764935496

## Health Sciences Library

*California Pacific Medical Center*

*The Health Sciences Library at the Pacific Campus serves the healthcare professionals of California Pacific Medical Center and University of the Pacific Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry.*